

THE TUMBLEWEED DOSSIER

BY SUGAR RAY DODGE

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

This book contains two different parts. The first is the original 2008 novel **The Tumbleweed Dossier**. The second is a trilogy of novelettes called **Paranormal Investigations**. The chapters in Paranormal Investigations were written several months apart, in isolation of one another. However, when put together they form a unified three-part story arc.

The city of Tumbleweed stands in place of the real world town of Valentine, Texas. A highly fictionalized version of the city of Flamingo, Florida appears in this book as well.

This book is a loving tribute to the television series *The X-Files*. There is also a blatant parody of Barack Obama within these pages, which is not particularly flattering. Due to the very personal way in which many people view the President, reader discretion is advised. No apologies are offered for either of these elements.

All references and/or allusions to real world events and popular culture are intentional, except for the ones that aren't.

PART ONE

THE TUMBLEWEED DOSSIER

"Do not believe in anything simply because you have heard it. Do not believe in anything simply because it is spoken and rumored by many. Do not believe in anything simply because it is found written in your religious books. Do not believe in anything merely on the authority of your teachers and elders. Do not believe in traditions because they have been handed down for many generations. But after observation and analysis, when you find that anything agrees with reason and is conducive to the good and benefit of one and all, then accept it and live up to it."

- Buddha

PROLOGUE

TUMBLEWEED, TEXAS
SATURDAY, MAY 17, 2008

It Was a Dark and Stormy Night

Well, maybe it wasn't so much stormy as it was dark. And it wasn't really that dark, either, because the light of the full moon illuminated the small west Texas town and the surrounding badlands. But a coyote was howling at the full moon somewhere, if that helps set the creepy tone any better.

A single blue car whizzed westward on US Highway 90, past a road sign that read:

WELCOME TO WONDERFUL TUMBLEWEED, TEXAS
HOME OF THE ONE AND ONLY FREDDY JOHNSON!
POPULATION 5,000

Filbert Ferrari, an unshaven, bitter husk of a salesman had been driving all day. His recent reassignment from his comfortable cubicle in New York City to be the greater West Texas Regional Sales Manager for Toasters, Inc., had taken its toll on him. He had been in Texas for a grand total of two weeks, and he hated it.

He hated the accents.

He hated the cowboy hats.

He hated the food.

He hated everything about the Lone Star State.

He especially hated that today he had to wake up early, leave his new apartment in San Antonio, get into his corporate car, and drive across Texas, stopping at every podunk cow town along the way to prospect for potential customers. It hadn't been a successful trip. Tumbleweed was his final stop, and he was so happy to finally be getting out of that car and into a bed. He had thought that San Antonio was bad, but conversing with people who lived out in the West Texas wilderness was enough to make him not complain about the city for at least a couple of weeks.

He pulled into the only hotel in town. It was a flickery-light type of place with litter all over the parking lot. He stepped out of the car and took in the sights, only to discover that there wasn't much to look at. Tumbleweed looked like a creepy old ghost town where people just happened to live. There was one nice looking mansion at the end of what he guessed was Main Street, but other than that the place was a total dive. Wild coyotes ran through the streets and it had a strange smell about it.

It smelled like ... death.

"What a dump," Filbert mumbled as he closed the driver's door. He retrieved his travel bag and walked inside. An elderly receptionist was reading a grocery store tabloid and smoking a cigarette, oblivious to Filbert's presence.

"Excuse me," he said, a hint of disdain in his voice. The old lady looked up and gave Filbert a look that seemed to say *why are you talking to me?* "I'd like a room."

The attendant closed her magazine and stabbed her cigarette out on the bare counter.

"How many?" she asked.

"One."

He handed her his corporate credit card and she began to process his request. She was using ancient machinery behind the counter, so Filbert tried to fill in the awkward silence with a sales pitch.

"You wouldn't by any chance be in the market for a brand new toaster, would you?"

Nothing. The attendant continued to give him the icy stare as she lit up another cigarette and let it dangle from her lip.

"I represent the greater west Texas region for Toasters, Inc." He placed his business card on the counter. "Just give me a ring and I'll hook you right up. We manufacture top quality toasters and sell them directly to the customer. We cut out the middle-man and pass the savings directly on to you—"

The dot-matrix printer loudly printing his invoice interrupted his memorized sales pitch. The attendant swung around and tore the paper off the printer, swung back around, wiped the ashes from her first cigarette onto Filbert's shoes, and put the paper on the counter.

"Breakfast is here in the lobby from five-thirty 'til ten. You can check out of your room anytime before eleven. Sign at the bottom please," she said almost robotically.

Filbert sighed and signed as he was instructed. The attendant handed him a set of brass keys.

They still make these, he thought.

"Room 101. Thank you and have a pleasant stay here in Tumbleweed."

Filbert nodded, but he really wanted to give her the finger. He walked down the hall to Room 101, fumbled with the keys for a few seconds, and opened the door up to some less than inviting accommodations. The room was too small, the bed was poorly made, and the TV set was obviously broken. Nevertheless, Filbert closed the door behind him, tossed his bag on the bed and changed into his pajamas.

The Lurker

Little did he know he was being watched as he changed, disgusting as that thought might be. The creature was hunting, and the hotel was his favorite place to find unsuspecting prey.

When he was finished changing, Filbert lay down on the bed and relaxed. It felt so good to be out of that car. He had almost fallen asleep when he heard a sudden thumping noise coming from somewhere. He sprang to his feet and looked around.

Nothing.

He opened up the closet door and inspected it.

Nothing.

He looked in the bathroom.

Nothing.

It's probably just this old building making noise; he thought, as if that made any kind of sense. He set the alarm clock on his cell phone for 7 a.m., turned out the lights, and slipped under the covers.

The lurker began to move again, this time careful not to wake his prey. Slowly, the closet door opened, and the lurker crept out into the room. Filbert rolled over to see a set of red eyes glowing in the darkness. He tried to call out for help, but the creature attacked before the screams could escape his throat.

* * *

Out in the Badlands ...

Dirk Durwood and Daisy Dotson were in the backseat of his father's 2002 Ford Bronco in the Tumbleweed Badlands, making out. It seemed the obligatory thing to do after the prom. After all, he was the Student Body President, the star quarterback and the wrestling team captain; she was the prettiest, richest, snottiest, brattiest, and (somehow) most popular girl in school. This night was predestined by decades of American High School tradition.

And tradition was not to be ignored!

Dirk was as excited as he could be, but Daisy was just along for the ride. She never really cared much for Dirk. He was a rather bland young man, and Daisy often wondered if he had ever had an original thought in his life. The make out session was becoming annoying. It was late, her dress was getting rumpled, her hair was a mess, and her makeup was smeared all over her face. Daisy pushed Dirk off of her and informed him that it was time for her to go home.

"Go home?" Dirk gasped, trying to catch his breath. "What do you mean?"

"I mean exactly that, Dirk," said the girl with the caramel colored curls, lying on her back looking up at her overly excited date. "I want to go home."

"But we haven't done it yet?"

"Done what yet?" she asked naively.

Dirk smiled, still breathing heavily. He reached into his pants and pulled out his fully erect manhood and waved it around.

"Omygosh, Dirk! Put that thing away!" Daisy shrieked, looking away.

"Oh, come on baby," said Dirk, laying back on top of her and kissing her on her neck. "You know you want to."

"Dirk, get off of me right now!" she commanded. Dirk didn't listen and instead reached up her dress and grabbed one of her boobs.

That was the last straw.

Her natural forces kicked in.

She let out a loud hiss that was only thought to be made by feral cats. Before Dirk could pull himself off of her, he was thrown off with strength an 18-year-old girl shouldn't have. He bounced off the roof of the truck, leaving a perfect human

shaped dent in it, and fell back to the floor. He looked up at Daisy, who was now crouched in some kind of attack position. Her eyes were now glowing red and her fangs had unsheathed themselves. Dirk didn't even know she had fangs, but he wasn't asking questions at this point.

"Take me home," she growled.

"Hell no, freak!" he replied, terrified. "Get out of my truck!"

"You can't leave me here," she protested. "It's a two mile walk back into town and I'm in a dress and heels!"

"Get out, bitch!"

"Fine!" she replied, her fangs sheathing and her eyes returning to blue. "Some prom date you are! Can't even take the lady home! Don't call me anymore, asshole!" she said as she climbed out the back.

"Don't worry about it!" he replied, getting into the driver's seat and pulling away. Daisy looked on as the Bronco pulled away with Dirk sticking his middle finger out the window.

"Son of a bitch," she moaned and started walking.

VAMPIRE (NOUN)

1. A PRETERNATURAL BEING, COMMONLY BELIEVED TO BE A REANIMATED CORPSE, THAT IS SAID TO SUCK THE BLOOD OF SLEEPING PERSONS AT NIGHT.

Sweet Sixteen Nosferatu

Even though she was a fully-fledged vampire, she had only been so for about two years. It was on her sixteenth birthday that her parents decided their adopted daughter was ready to become a creature of the night. Her father infected her with the Curse of the Vampire, and a week later her human body died. Three days after that, she rose, fully undead, and not quite sure how to use all of her new abilities. She had often seen her father turn into a bat, or a coyote, or fog. If she were proficient in these skills, she would have turned into the fog and blown back into town, but the closest she had ever come to fully transforming into anything was the time she accidentally sprouted coyote ears and couldn't turn them back for two weeks. She wore a shawl to school during in the meantime.

It was so embarrassing.

She didn't want to risk being stuck in the fog, so she continued to walk.

Be Sure to Brush Your Fangs

Little did she know she was being watched from afar. Doctor Ronnie James "RJ" Wiley, the local dentist, had been following her and Dirk from a distance most of the evening. The bearded, eccentric tooth doctor had been planning the abduction of Daisy for months, ever since he had discovered that she was a vampire at her last checkup. Her parents had thought that her fangs would be undetectable during the daylight hours when their powers were weak, but they underestimated Wiley's extensive knowledge of supernatural and paranormal phenomenon. He had kept his discovery to himself, not just because he didn't want to become their next victim,

but also he needed them. More specifically, he needed Daisy. It was a shame that this little girl would have to be sacrificed, but he could endure his own plight no longer.

He waited until Durwood's Bronco was completely out of sight, uttered a silent prayer, turned on the high beams, threw his Jeep into gear and drove directly at her. Daisy turned and shielded her eyes with her arm. Her fangs unsheathed and she hissed at the unknown light coming towards her. Before she knew what was happening, she heard tires coming to a halt in the dirt, a door opening, and she was suddenly covered in powdered garlic.

"Ew, gross!" she moaned as she examined the substance. "That smells really bad! What'd you do that for, asshole?! You ruined my dress!"

Then she saw her dentist step into the light, and she was strangely relieved. He was holding an open, gold fringed Bible and was wearing a silver cross around his neck.

"Doctor Wiley," she said, confused. Hives were already beginning to form on her skin, and she fell to her knees and began to dry heave.

Garlic does that to a vampire, see.

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die," Wiley said, as if he didn't even need the Bible.

Daisy covered her ears and screeched. It was working.

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die," Wiley repeated and Daisy fell to her knees. He kept repeating the passage as the young girl writhed in pain on the ground.

Finally, she passed out. Wiley closed the Bible and knelt down beside her limp body.

* * *

The Pit

Daisy's eyes fluttered as she slowly woke. Her head throbbed and she felt weak. She sat up and looked at her surroundings. She had been laid in a very nice bed with purple blankets. She could barely see anything; the room was illuminated with ultraviolet lights, making the darkness dark and anything not dark blindingly bright. She saw her prom dress glowing on the wall across from her, the top half completely covered in garlic. She looked down at her clothes and found that she was wearing a white nightgown.

"The pervert!" she cursed, assuming that Wiley had gotten a very good mental photograph of her naked body as he changed her clothes.

She looked around and noticed that the walls around her were covered in crude paintings of events from the New Testament. There was Christ walking on water, the Sermon on the Mount, the raising of Lazarus, the Last Supper, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection and others. Daisy hissed and turned her face. There was also a faint noise coming from somewhere. It sounded like an AM Christian radio station being piped in through the air vents. She stood on the bed and listened closely to be sure.

"Bloody hell," she moaned when her suspicions were confirmed. She sat back down on the bed and pouted. She knew that as long as she was trapped in this room with this religious crap all over, her powers would be useless, and therefore could not escape.

What does Wiley want with me? She thought as she lay back down. Then she noticed a thick book on the nightstand beside her. It was *Twilight* by Stephenie Meyer. She recognized the book as one of the favorites of her girlfriends and even her little brother, all of them professing their allegiance to *Team Edward* or *Team Jacob*, or some nonsense like that. It was supposed to be about vampires in love or something. *Maybe he's trying to be funny*, she thought. She opened up the book and found a message written in marker on the inside cover.

FINISH THIS AND I'LL BRING YOU ANOTHER.

Daisy examined the size of the book. It was a monster. Surely this meant that Wiley intended to keep her in this hole for a while. While she detested reading romances, preferring spy novels and thrillers, she figured that reading a mushy little love story was a lot better than being raped. She sighed and turned to the first page. It took her eyes a few seconds to adjust to the light, but when they did she began to read. After a few pages of mind numbing, Mary Sue-ish drivel, she thought *Omygosh! He's trying to bore me to death!*

"Somebody help me!"

To read the rest of the story, pick up *The Tumbleweed Dossier* by Sugar Ray Dodge on Amazon.com!